Do You Know Where The Wild Roses Grow?

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/46920442.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Manhunter (1986), HEU- Hannibal Extended Universe
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Will Graham (Manhunter), Buster (Hannibal)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Hannibal (TV) Fusion, Canon Compliant, Dark Will Graham, Serial Killer Will Graham, Canon-Typical Violence, Canon-Typical Behavior, Canon- typical language, Autistic Will Graham, Autistic Hannibal Lecter, Meet-Cute, Younger Will Graham, Younger Hannibal Lecter, Soulmates, Food as a Metaphor for Love, References to Paradise Lost (Milton), Heu, Hannibal Extended Universe, Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter in Love, Blood and Injury, Falling In Love, Pre-Relationship, Hannibal Lecter Has Feelings, Hannibal Lecter Being Hannibal Lecter, Secret name AU, I can help you if you ask me to, Hannibal Lecter had an oral fixation, Food Kink, Hannibal Lecter is simp for his beautiful angel of death, Main character's die but it's not NBC Hannibal Lecter Or Will Graham, Alternate Origin Story
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2023-05-03 Words: 6,706 Chapters: 1/2

Do You Know Where The Wild Roses Grow?

by Apocalyptic_Space_They

Summary

Will Graham is a hot shot detective in the New Orleans Homicide Division when one bad decision spirals into a chance encounter with a mysterious gun man that leaves him both critically injured and critically embarrassed.

Now he's on medical leave with time on his hands and revenge in his heart. When he picks up his suspect's trail at a local flop house and follows him all the way out to rural Maryland, he thinks his revenge will be easy.

Some things aren't as easy as they look, even when they're holding a teeny tiny terrier puppy.

Throw in a Milton quoting cannibal surgeon and you have a match made in Hell

Thankfully even Hell can taste like Heaven with the right company and a carefully selected marinade

Notes

This fic exists because I made a joke about TV show Hannigram not fitting with their canon book origin stories because they secretly weren't those book characters at all.

Then I got very hyperfixated on the concept of how it might work

Everything that happens in this fic has a very loose foundation in past events referenced, however vaguely in Hannibal dialogue, sometimes in passing, other times in flash backs, or intentionally incorrect clues

This is one of the ways that might've worked

See the end of the work for more notes

Two hours ago, you'd never been able to guess what horrors lay within the sprawling white house, nestled in the heart of one New Orleans' most respected high end subdivisions. Now it was a circus, reporters, neighborhood snoops, an entire crowd gathering hoping to catch a glimpse of someone else's worst possible day, and a couple dozen cops trying to keep them on the other side of the yellow police tape.

Will Graham, rising star (and rumored loose canon) of the New Orleans Homicide Division, surveyed the gathering crowd. Murder always drew nosy neighbors and all the assorted people drawn to the sensational miserable drama of one of their own being killed in their own home. Every one of them milling around gossiping in theatrical glee.

Something out there was tingling Will's cop senses. The killer might be in the crowd somewhere, watching them. Killers liked watching the police chase their own rails sometimes. On a whim, he barged back inside, stripping off his jacket and business casual button up as he went. His badge and holster were also dropped unceremoniously on the rumpled pile of clothes.

Now just in his white undershirt and black jeans, Will looked different. Surveying the difference in a bathroom mirror he frowned, disapproving. Even with his gun hidden under his shirt, tucked into the waist of his jeans at the small of his back, he was still to professional looking.

Closing his eyes, Will centered himself, slowly letting the country drift back up to the surface so it was showing in his demeanor again, so his vowels were soft and round, and his R's remembered their melodic Cajun roll.

That was better, now the man in the mirror wasn't a cop, he was just a guy, a little to tired after work, ready to be home. Perfectly unremarkably nonthreatening.

Looking much more the part, Will went out the back door, slid through the dark of the victim's huge back yard then cut through several yards to get around the corner so he could approach the crowd from behind. It was a much better place to listen and watch from. Maybe he'd locate the killer or learn something important about him. He didn't have to wait long for the gossip to turn toward ugly under belly of the family's history.

"Oh my god? Did you hear what happened? Someone broke in, shot them down like animals!"

"That's awful, they were such nice people"

"Not that nice"

"Oh you don't know what you're talking about"

"I do too, you don't know what you're talking about"

"The wife, she always said hi to me"

"Sure they were polite, they had to be, but that son of theirs. He wasn't right in the head. No proper family brings up a weirdo like *that*"

"Hush, they didn't have a son"

"They do, or they did, I went to school with him, I remember. They don't want people to remember him on account of his being touched. He was always staring, mumbling and what not, didn't have friends, didn't want friends. Not that we would've been friends with-"

"Oh wait! I remember the son now, they sent him to one of those pray away the gay camps didn't they?"

"No it was a boot camp for trust fund delinquents"

"You're both wrong it was rehab"

"I heard he ran away"

"Y'all, my wife's cousin works intake at the morgue. The kid killed himself while he was on the phone with them, begging and crying for them to let him come back home. They wouldn't let him so... ***BOOM***"

The man made a finger gun to aim at his temple, miming shooting himself. The woman next to him slapped his arm in minor reproach. The whole circle tittered, intoxicated with voyeuristic glee.

"That's disgusting. He didn't kill himself, why would he? He joined a cult just to upset them. Ungrateful little prick. What was his name again?"

"Wasn't he named after his great grandfather?"

"I think it was some European king or something. You went to school with him. What was his name?"

"Do I look like a fairy? I don't know his damn name. Psycho freak knew better then to even look at us."

It went on and on like that Will didn't know if any of that would end up being particularly helpful, the family did have a son with lots of behavior problems on record. He was disinherited 7 years ago, then nothing. He disappeared. It might be worth looking into him. To bad the kid himself wasn't here. Whomever the killer was, he hadn't shown his hand yet, no one out here seemed significantly out of place in the crowd so far.

The guy standing beside him was also listening to the gossips, scoffing quietly, rolling his eyes periodically. At the last declaration, he huffed a barely audible, annoyed "please"

Will looked the guy over. They were probably around the same age though the new guy's baby face made it hard to say for certain. He was more working class then the rest of the people clumped up in little groups crowding the police line hoping to catch a glimpse. He had a vagueness that made him look otherworldly. His hair was dark, cropped short in that hair

style George Clooney inspired all the pretty boys to get, it was named after...? a Caesar? He thought so. Scoffing was a potentially good sign, maybe the guy knew more about the family then the rest of them, something useful. Will turned to him, kept his voice low, holding just enough snark.

"Tragedy always brings the vultures out huh?"

The guy startled, grimaced tightly through a jagged shrug then looked away. Despite being clearly dismissed, Will tried again.

"You don't seem impressed with their version of events..."

The man screwed up his face, a quiet angry laugh drifting between them. He looked out over the crowd thinking, made a decision. His voice was heavily laden with contempt.

"People like that, they don't get murdered in cold blood for no reason... and these people... out here gossiping about their son, hoping something awful befell him to alleviate their boredom for a half an hour. It's sick, evil, whatever that means."

Will considered the best way to keep this guy talking, in case he knew something important.

"Did you know their son?"

"No one knew their son, they kept him locked away from the world like Frankenstein's Monster, horrified that someone might witness their shame in the fact of his freakish existence. They always said it was for his protection, for the good of the family, that the world wouldn't understand little boys like him. Eventually he understood they meant that it was for their own good, not his. They didn't really consider him part of their family or care about him at all since he could never be... *normal*"

The man spit out the last word like it was covered in battery acid, shrugging in angry defiance, still scowling. His eyes though, his eyes were flat and emotionless, it was unsettling, like he was a puppet with two different people at the controls.

Will went cold, the air frozen in his lungs briefly. He forced himself to breath, counting as he did, grounding himself

One, two, three, fuck, fuck, fuck-

His heart beat heavy and painful with the realization that this man knew all to many of the family's most hidden secrets. That his tone was far to knowing, to enraged. Revenge, he embodied righteous revenge. Will froze for a few dire seconds, struck immobile by the intensity of the realization.

Four, five, six, seven, dammit-

Like a nightmare the man moved in slow motion turning to face him fully. Still Will couldn't move, couldn't catch up.

Eight, nine, ten, eleven-, oh fuck no. Dammit

Stepping a little further back into the crowd, the man smirked at Will, knowing every second the crowd folded around him made it increasingly Impossible for Will to safely pull his gun. The man smirk sneered, cold and angry.

"Makes you wonder what horrors they must've visited upon him to deserve being gunned down like rabid dogs, don't you think Detective Graham? The country squire bit is a little much, overselling that good ole boy backstory, Detective. You're not the only one who knows how to blend in, to be unremarkable"

Twelve, thirteen, fourteen, MOVE gawddamit

The man took one more long step back, grabbed one of the gossiping old ladies by the shoulders and whirl shoved her at Will, bolting out of the crowd. Her friends screamed and flocked around him, hysterically excited to be part of the dramatics.

Fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen-, Fuck, Now Go!

Finally Will clawed his way out of his body's inertia so he could move again. He'd lost so many precious seconds. Desperation crawled it's way up his throat as he worked to disentangle himself from the flock of worked up neighbors to go after the suspect.

The guy had a significant lead, he had to catch up. Will pushed himself to run harder once he was clear of the crowd, faster. An essential half block away, the man took a sharp right down a side street.

Run faster

It felt like an eternity before he was rounding the same corner. He paused to collect himself, to try and put eyes on the guy, when a bullet caught him neatly in the meaty part of his shoulder, dropping him to the pavement with a surprised exclamation. Of course the guy has a gun too. He'd been so stupid.

A heartbeat later and the man was looming over him, his face blank save for the ever present annoyed grimace.

"My war isn't with you Detective Graham. I severed her spinal column with a single shot. You're alive because I want you to be"

Will's vision was blurring around the edges. Did the bullet nick his lung? Pain, blood loss, and adrenaline were making it difficult to think. What the fuck just happened? He spit blood in the man's direction, if he was gonna die, he'd die fighting.

"How the hell do you know who I am?"

"I like to know the players. It helps me know as many potential outcomes as possible. I admit coming back was a mistake I won't make again. We don't have to be enemies Detective. You had a nomadic childhood too, an abusive father and a non-existent mother. You made detective early but now you're always in trouble for not following the asinine rules, for losing

your temper. You have a violent streak Detective. We're not unalike you and I. This doesn't have to be a war. I did what I needed to do, it's over. Leave it alone"

"I'm nothing like you, and I'm gonna do my job, catch you-"

"Fine have it your way"

The man was on him in a second, choking him. Will cursed as his world faded to black. At least he died fighting...

***Beep**

Beep

Beep beep

Beep beep beep beep*

Will woke up in the hospital with a start. He was alive? He didn't expect to live.

The next few days were a blur of checkups, medication, and recovery tests. When he was finally released from the hospital he beelined to Homicide to talk to his Captain.

"Will, so good to see you up and around. You haven't been released back to work from leave yet though son. You should be at home, resting"

"I know Sir, I wanted to talk to you about the guy who shot me."

"No worries Graham, we got him. A vagrant in his late 60's. We caught him with the gun and the jacket you described after the incident. He even had a couple Polaroids of you from around the precinct. He was stalking you. Good catch Detective"

A slow creeping horror settled in Will's stomach. That man was watching him and he never saw anything remotely suspicious. It was terrifying. The man's bright eyes and baby face mocked him from the depths of his imagination.

"What? That doesn't make sense Sir. This guy was in his twenties, good looking, clean. He wasn't a vagrant. He knew things about the family, knew things about me."

"Don't look a gift horse in the mouth Will. The family has pull with the local government and wants this over now. We caught the man stalking you. It's over"

It's over. The shooter said that too as he lay there bleeding on the pavement. No, it wasn't over until Will Graham damn well said so.

"No, look Captain, this guy, he's angry. He's just getting started. He's gonna escalate, a serial in the making sir. We can't just shrug this off"

"I understand you're upset Will. It's comforting to imagine it was some monster that shot you, not an old man looking for Ripple and cigarette money. You're still on leave, you were shot, publically humiliated, go home, rest, lick your wounds, figure out how to be ok with this because it's already done. Don't go chasing a ghost that doesn't exist son. You weren't supposed to be milling anonymously in a crowd with a gun, you're lucky you're not getting a visit from internal affairs. I went to bat for you kid, but you're already on thin ice with the department. Go home"

"Fine Sir"

Will frowned, already exhausted. He really did need to get home to rest. But first a small detour to evidence. If they didn't care about catching this guy? Fine, he did. There had to be some evidence somewhere and if there was, he'd find it, find the mystery shooter and prove to everyone that he was right. Simple as that.

Pleased with himself, Will hummed a little ditty for the joy of it. His favorite part was chasing the bad guys.

Bad boys, bad boys, whatcha gonna do? Whatcha gonna do when they come for you?

-

5 Weeks later

Captain Michael Sparks

New Orleans Homicide Department

Phone Message Left at 11:59pm

Hey Captain,

I'm taking your advice to rest. I extended my medical leave with some vacation time. Don't worry, I had plenty. I'm heading out to the east coast for awhile, Maryland... Gonna do some fishing, maybe a little hunting if I get lucky. Don't worry Captain. I'm not doing anything stupid, just getting my head right like you said.

--

9 days later

Maryland

Will might not ever admit it to anyone out loud, but the lead he found that got him on trail of the man who shot him was at least partially luck. He'd been doing door to doors looking for anything or anyone, and stumbled onto the flop house the guy was staying at under the name Charlie Keaton. He couldn't find any other information about Charlie Keaton so it was probably an alias. It was enough though. The flop house rental lead to a shady car dealership rental, which lead to some inquires about some suspicious activity on the east coast. Now it seemed like Charlie Keaton, whomever he might really be, was in Maryland. So Will was following him out there. If it was the last thing he did, he was gonna find where that asshole was hiding out.

He would find him and make him pay for humiliating him, shooting him, leaving him for dead, and making him the joke of precinct.

2.5 weeks later

Rural Maryland

8: 27 pm

Will peered through the trees at the unassuming cabin. He hadn't approached the cabin yet. He'd been looking forward to this moment for to long. He had to be certain so he was hidden away, watching for now. Nothing was going to ruin this moment for him. He couldn't wait to see this alleged Charlie Keaton's face when he realized his game was over.

At dusk, Charlie stepped out on the porch with a teeny tiny brown and white bundle of fur. It was a scruffy, scrawny little terrier puppy... that he was taking out to pee? The man Will only knew as Charlie Keaton, sat crouching in the early autumn leaves playing with a puppy as it hopped and rolled around. The puppy was no bigger then a grown man's hand, yipping piercing puppy barks, play growling and gnawing on his suspect's fingers as the man beamed at the sharp toothed little thing. Will huffed in distaste at the scene. It was annoyingly normal. He'd grown up around dogs, every country kid did. As tiny as it was now, that little pint sized terrier would be a menace when it grew up, not unlike it's owner.

Not that it mattered, his owner would be past tense soon enough. Once they were back inside Will sauntered slowly up to the house, settled confidently on the porch. Knocked loud, but not quite it's the cops loud.

He was going to have fun with this.

Behind the door he could hear teeny puppy yips and Charlie hushing it. When he opened the door he had the tiny pup in his arms again, adoration for the little runt all over his face.

"Buster, we really have to work on your barking buddy-, oh... It's you."

Charlie Keaton's face fell when he saw Will, that squished scowl forming like magic on his face.

"What are you doing here Detective Graham?"

"You're not gonna invite me in?"

The man grimaced at him, looking out into the growing darkness over his shoulder for longer then Will would like. What was he looking at? Finally Charlie stepped back, giving way.

"Suit yourself I guess, let me put Buster up, his previous owners weren't taking very good care of him. He's under weight. He doesn't need the stress"

The small cabin was filled wall to wall with hunting and fishing equipment. A desk by the far wall held a vast assortment of outdoor themed equipment, some of it Will recognized, some of it he didn't. There was everything from little fishing lures to a bow of some sort. It looked like a Bass Pro shop exploded in here. That figured.

Will sneered at the strange little man fussing over a puppy at a time like this. He was supposed to be afraid for his life, for his freedom, not sitting in this creepy cabin in the middle of nowhere, fussing over a puppy's nervous stomach. Will snorted at the puppy coddling. What it was, was suspicious.

"Oh? Did you kill his owners too?"

Charlie scowled, eyes dark, staring murderously at him as he carefully closed the puppy into a back room. Will laughed out loud.

"Oh shit you did. Where the fuck did you come from? Who the hell kills someone over a fucking dog?"

Charlie cracked his neck, going expressionless other then his ever present scowl. He was unnervingly calm, wandering idly around the room, running finger tips lightly over all his hunting and fishing equipment. Little weirdo. Will hadn't really been asking for an answer, but Charlie either didn't realize or didn't care and gave one anyway.

"People shouldn't abuse dogs Detective. They didn't ask for you to make them pets-. Nevermind, you wouldn't understand..."

Charlie caressed a hunting bow laying out on the desk, eyes glowing with old affection, pressing the pads of his fingers into the grip, almost ignoring Will entirely. He didn't bother looking away from his beloved bow, as he spoke

"I didn't want it to go like this you know. You could've gone on with your life Detective Graham. You could've gotten your little commendations and never thought about me ever again. I even left New Orleans, I gave you room. You just had to follow me though didn't you? I understand that, once the hunt starts, it's hard to let go of it, isn't it? You're not so different from me after all.You came all way out here to flush one lone duck out of his safe

sleeping place in the marsh grass. You had to follow the scent and I had to fly. Now, neither one of us can undo whatever comes next"

Maryland

Saint Sebastian Hospital, ER Wing

12:43 am

"Paging Doctor Lecter, Emergency Surgery consult, room 14. Paging Doctor Lecter, Emergency Surgery consult, room 14."

Hannibal power walked, brisk but composed to the other end of the emergency room. It shouldn't be to critical if he was just getting the page without an accompanying string of emergency codes.

Hannibal took a second to look at the chart before he went in the room, a hunting accident in the middle of the night. Interesting.

There were two men waiting for him, both of them were probably in their mid twenties. One was notably unconscious with an arrow sticking out of his thigh. The wound was field dressed meticulously well to keep the unconscious man in one piece... though it was wrapped in such a way, that it might be difficult to unwrap without tearing his femoral artery. A hair to the right he would have bled out in just a few seconds with no chance to even make it to the hospital. As it was, it would still be touch and go. Lucky for him... perhaps.

The unconscious man was sweat soaked and bloody. His prematurely silver grey hair matted down with it. Blood was all over his hands and face, starting to dry in some places. It looked like he'd been rolling in blood. There was no reason for that if all he had was a singular arrow wound, also Interesting

Hannibal turned the full power of his focus on the unconscious man's companion, who was pacing furiously, rubbing his face. The sickly sweet acrid stink of fear rolled off of him. There was another more subtle scent under the fear, anger? Not quite, anger... righteousness? A spark of arousal perhaps?

Curious.

"Hello gentlemen, I'm Dr Lecter. I'll be performing your friend's surgery tonight. Please tell me exactly what happened so that I'm best able to help. The bleeding is currently staunched, however a situation such as this requires swift action "

The conscious man who was also quite bloody and sweaty, twitchy with anxiety, flinched obviously when Hannibal called them friends. So not friends then, more questions then

answers here. Hannibal filed all these little tidbits away reflexively, intrigued.

"It was a-..."

The man, caught in remembering the incident, froze. Hannibal cleared his throat in hopes it would rattle him loose from the memory without having to get into his space. People could be jumpy after an incident like this. It worked, his eyes refocused on Hannibal.

"I'm sorry, umm yes, yeah-, it was a hunting accident. We were hunting big game, well deer. It was an accident."

"An accident, I see... and the blood on his face? Were you injured as well, you have blood on your face as well..."

The man startled at that, looking away, kept his eyes on the wall. His scent was heavy with embarrassment, pride, and shame as he avoided Hannibal's eyes.

"Oh uh... He uhh, when he fell he was panicking, he bit his tongue... Pretty bad. When I was carrying him to the car, I guess I got some on me... I guess."

That was a blatant lie. Whatever really happened, the man was horrified about it, but also excited, exhilarated perhaps. Oh this was the most interesting thing that'd happened in weeks, months even. Hannibal schooled his face into a concerned surgeon's expression.

"You guess? It's important that I know what happened accurately, so I can help your friend without anything unforseen cropping up"

like his untimely death

"I... uhh, I'm not guessing, I know, that's what happened... It's been a long day."

"I understand certainly, and if he comes to before surgery it would help if we had a name for him, to calm him down."

"Oh it's, Umm Will Graham."

"Ok, thank you, and yours?"

The man froze under Hannibal's piercing gaze. He got the impression the man knew Hannibal was looking more intently then any surgeon ever would. The tiger and the lion crossing paths unexpectedly, deciding whether to fight or flee.

In their shared looking, Hannibal took in the details of the man. His eyes were blue grey, the color of winter water. His dark hair was just long enough to curl around his ears. It gave him an air of innocence that Hannibal suspected was intentionally misleading. it was very fetching.

The man withstood his visual examination, returning it without appearing to. He stood, blinking at Hannibal, apparently short circuited again. Though Hannibal suspected that was not the whole truth, he still patted the man's shoulder in noncommittal comfort. He flinched

again at Hannibal's touch. An old injury or abuse trauma possibly. A history shrouded in violence... or he was adrenaline jumpy from whatever actually happened tonight. There were to many variables to know for certain.

Hannibal looked at the unconscious man again, applying the full measure of his problem solving ability to this new puzzle. Not the wound, that was the most boring thing happening in here. No, the most interesting problem in the room was a blood soaked man with blue grey eyes and deep mahogany curls, carrying a gentle blood thirsty violence just under his skin. Now that was fascinating.

Hannibal didn't mind waiting on the man to give him a name. He wouldn't give his real name right now anyway so it hardly mattered. He shifted tactics to a more indirect one.

"All right sir, Does Mister Graham have identification on him?"

"I-, I don't know."

"That's fine, I'm going to go ahead and take Mister Graham to surgery. I'll page a nurse to bring you some food shortly."

"Oh-, no thank you, I'm not hungry"

"I'm afraid I must insist, you'll need to keep up your strength. Food is essential for that, though to be absolutely honest I hesitate to call the slop the hospital serves food. Regardless it will sustain you. So it will have to do for now."

"I-, yes ok... Um, my name is umm.... Charlie, uhh Charlie Keaton.... I mean... That's... my... name?"

It most certainly was not. He didn't even look like he was trying to believe it himself. Hannibal could teach this young man so much. His scent was rich with potential. It wouldn't be appropriate to laugh out loud so he didn't. He wasn't that rude.

"Is it? Well, Thank you for indulging your doctor then-, Charlie."

What an interesting situation. Hannibal wondered if he could wake this Will Graham up long enough to ask him some questions. He was so curious about what actually happened, what happened to his tongue specifically. Hannibal needed to know what really happened to that man's tongue... and if he also found out what might be inspiring those rolling intense emotions in fake Charlie Keaton, well... all the better to eat him with.

If was a good day for a wielding a scalpel, Hannibal was delighted.

He wheeled Will Graham into a surgical suite with two minutes and fifteen seconds to spare before the surgical team arrived.

Time was of the essence. Hannibal put on his surgical mask and gloves, then made short work of going through the man's pockets, taking everything he had in them, stuffing it all in his own pockets. His ID said William Graham was 27 years old, 168 lbs, grey hair, grey eyes. Blood type, Ab negative. He was a Homicide detective in New Orleans of all places.

Awfully far from home detective

Will Graham stirred. He was waking up. Excellent.

One minute and fifty seconds until they'd have company

"Detective Graham. I'm Doctor Lecter. I'll be taking care of you today. I know it must seem a bit rude, but I'm terribly curious. What happened to your tongue sir?"

Will Graham opened his mouth to speak, blood spilling out, his tongue was a ragged crooked stump behind his teeth. His voice was agonizingly wet and lisping.

"I can'd.... talk... mush...he... bidth... idd... ovvfff... an... ade... it"

**One minute and fifteen seconds*.*

"Please don't worry Detective. I have some experience with understanding people even when they're having some trouble with their pronunciation. I must say, that seems quite unlikely. He, bit your tongue off and ate it? Is it possible you've misremembered in the chaos? Why would he eat your tongue? Quite a monstrous thing to do"

Will Graham was to delirious to feel the energy shift in the room. It wasn't his fault, he was currently under a tremendous amount of stress. Thankfully it would be over for him soon.

**Forty five seconds*.*

Detective Graham dribbled blood everywhere as he tried torturously to speak clearly.

"He ithhh uh mothhhterhhh.... a theyyial.... Kiiiiyyuhhh"

Twenty five seconds

Hannibal was moving fast and efficient as he spoke, preparing the emergency anesthetics for surgery. He peered over his shoulder at the detective as he did.

"A serial killer?"

Detective Graham sagged with relief.

"Yeth!"

"I understand detective, I'll take care of everything."

Five seconds

The needle slid into the detectives vein, anesthetic took him under quickly.

Now

Donning his most professional surgeon person suit, Hannibal looked up just as the surgical team was flooding in. They all had a job to do after all. Time to work. He smiled

encouragingly with his eyes, so the team could see the smile above his mask.

"Excellent Nurse Carrington, I'm so glad you're my lead today. We have no information on file for our patient, he's not local and he's lost a lot of blood so we need to see what we have in stock for universal donation."

"Yes Doctor"

The nurse bustled away. Hannibal turned to another nurse in the operating suite.

"Nurse Bryerson, do we still have the Paradise Lost opera in here? If so I think I'd like that today"

The nurse checked his selection of music

"Yes Doctor"

As operatic strings swelled in the air Hannibal smiled happily to himself. What a fantastic day. Whomever Charlie Keaton was, he would have to thank him for making his day so much better. He'd been so incredibly bored lately.

This though, this was interesting. He should thank Mr Keaton personally, see what he's about. Maybe invite him over for breakfast after he was done cleaning up his mess.

The monitors and machines started chirping in earnest concern for the patient as his oxygen levels and blood pressure dipped. Of course the machines couldn't know he had no intention of letting Detective Graham off this table alive. Not when there was someone so much more interesting in the waiting room.

If he was still in the waiting room of course. Hannibal hoped so. He didn't seem like he was going to leave, but he didn't have an overwhelming reason to stay besides making sure Detective Graham didn't survive the day. Most likely, it would depend on whether he had a reason to stay in the area. If Hannibal was a praying man, he'd send up a quick prayer to keep the man here at the hospital until he was done.

He wasn't a praying man... and furthermore he had much more faith in himself then the whims of divine intervention.

Praise be Hannibal Lecter, may thy path lead the to untold fulfillment

It wouldn't be appropriate to laugh at his own internal joke as the piercing sound of the flat line alarm cut through the surgery suite, so he kept it inside as they spent long minutes trying to resuscitate the patient, to no avail. When he'd been at it long enough the alarms were shut off. One by one all the beeps and blips and wailing alarms fell silent.

"Ok unfortunately Nurse Carrington, I'm afraid it's time to declare it. John Doe, Time of death: 5:42 am"

It took him a while longer to get superficially cleaned up and take the rest of the week off for mental health follow up after the loss of a patient. He didn't want any interruptions to the plan

that was blooming in the back of his mind. A plan ripe with possibilities. Once everything was in order, he headed out to find his mysterious tongue eating friend if he was still around.

At the last minute he decided to leave his bloody scrubs on for now, just to see Charlie's reaction, only throwing his coat over them to protect him from prying hospital eyes.

Ahh there was his bloody Seraphim now, pacing in the waiting room. He was still here.

The mind palace echoes with the horns of fate as they serenade a new god

Charlie was very careful not to leap up when he recognized Hannibal. After he reintroduced himself they spoke briefly about banal things as they would be expected to. Hannibal let his long wool coat fall open just enough to give Charlie a chance to catch the blood, if he was looking.

He was definitely looking

"Ah Mr Keaton, I'm afraid I have bad news"

The angel with his secret sacred name, blinked blankly, eyes riveted to the blood splashed across Hannibal's chest. With the distraction it took him a minute to remember that he was Mr Keaton. They'd have to work on believable covers at some point. It was an art form of its own, being someone else in the eyes of the world. Hannibal Lecter knew all about that.

Charlie grimaced, clearing his throat. He managed to look believably concerned, impressive really. His only tell was the way his eyes raked over the blood stains on Hannibal's scrubs. The way the blood made him lick his lips hungrily. He cleared his throat again, humming, to appear uncertain.

"Uhh... Yeah?"

"Unfortunately your friend, Detective Graham didn't make it through surgery. He'd lost a lot of blood. Additionally it looked like he was already recuperating from a gunshot wound. Unfortunately in his weakened state his heart simply couldn't take the strain."

Charlie blinked wide eyed and relieved, though he hid the relief well.

"Oh, I see. That's very unfortunate. I uh didn't know him well but um-"

"I'm so sorry to interrupt Mr Keaton, it's so rude of me. It's only this, I'm off work just now, for the week actually due to the mental strain of losing a patient so unexpectedly. I have all his clothes, and the contents of his pockets. I thought that since you were friends, you might be interested in having it, for your own comfort"

Hannibal allowed himself a small self Indulgent smile as his angel processed all of that.

"I-, oh-, uh yes, please. That would be great."

Now for the coup de grace, he let his coat fall open wider, giving the man a better idea of just how much blood he was covered in as he asked his next question. That juxtaposition was

important.

"It might seem strange, but I rather enjoy cooking. I think we have much to discuss Mr Keaton. I can help you if you'd like, all you have to do is ask. Why don't you join me for breakfast..."

"You can... help me?"

"Yes, though this is perhaps not the best setting to discuss the details. If you agree to breakfast. You'll get a home cooked meal, I get the pleasure of your company, and we can discuss it"

"Oh uhh, I-"

"Please Mr Keaton, indulge me. I'm sure pork tongue won't sustain you all day. I can make you a delicious filling breakfast while we talk about all the ways I might be able to help. No obligation for anything else."

The man rubbed his face, earnest concern and conflicted longing at war there. He scrubbed roughly at his eyes, temples, and scalp, tugging at his hair. His tousled curls popping in a happy messy dark swirl from the abuse when he finally let his hands fall back to his sides. Charlie bit his lip, genuinely shy.

"Yeah, ok but I have a puppy, he's already been alone for so long. I don't want to leave him any more then I have to. He'll think he's been abandoned"

"Well that won't do, we can go get him first. Follow me, we'll take my Bentley. I can always bring you back to your car later. I'll even feed your pup, if you'd like. When I was a boy, I was responsible for feeding the hunting hounds. It's been a long time, but I've never forgotten a recipe in my life. I wouldn't want to leave anyone out. It would be terribly rude. What's your pup's name?"

Charlie flushed happily at the inclusion of his puppy.

"Yeah ok that's awfully nice of you, his name's Buster. He's a jack Russell terrier, beagle mix. He's so tiny, smart, precious, and such a little shit. I've only known him for a little while but I love him so much. He's my little baby boy"

Charming. Hannibal gave him a small encouraging smile as the slid into the comforting embrace of his Bentley. Safe as houses.

"I'm happy to include little Buster. The most honest love is a love given fully from a place of intimate knowledge and understanding. It's not just the act of acceptance that's important. Equally important is embracing the ones we love fully, a sacred duty and an honor when we're allowed the luxury of full understanding."

"You think?"

"I do, and I'm sure I'm right in this"

"Oh, Well, that sounds nice. Nice? I don't usually sound so trite. It's been a weird day. I'm usually better at this. Actually no I'm not ever better at this at all, but usually I'm... less dopey at least"

Hannibal nodded reassurance at him.

"Perfectly understandable given the extreme circumstances though you've not given me the impression you were, as you say, dopey, at any point. I wonder though, now that Detective Graham no longer has any use for his name and identity, have you given any thought to taking it from him? It seems a shame to waste such a perfect cover persona on an oversized slab of roast beast. After all, he came all this way to give you a surprise, rude to not take a man's dying gift don't you think?"

"What?! You mean, be Will Graham? I... Don't know... I hadn't thought about it. I don't think I'd make a good cop"

"Oh well do think on it, you wouldn't have to stay a cop. People move across the country and change professions all the time. we can talk details over breakfast"

"Hmm I could be Will Graham. Hi, I'm Will Graham, asshole cowboy cop... Could I ruin his reputation while I have it? I kind of want to ruin his reputation while I'm in charge of it... if I do... decide to take it."

"You most certainly could do anything that pleased you with it, including ruining Will Graham's reputation"

Hannibal's angel, soon to be Will Graham, smiled then, genuine, amused, vicious and radiant. Resplendent in his vengefulness.

The wicked needle sharp joy was infectious, soon Hannibal was feeling it's effects in a bubbling joy that washed away the days concerns. He couldn't quite contain the poetry that wanted to pour out of his mouth and nest in those shining blue grey eyes.

"Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight"

Hannibal's brand new Will Graham recognized the line, his smile widened to something near ecstatic.

"Paradise Lost. Nice. Impeccable taste Doctor Lecter... *If death consort with thee, death is to me as life. So forcible within my heart I feel the bond of nature draw me to my own, my own in thee, for what thou art is mine*"

I am drawn to you as you are drawn to me, for what thou art is mine.

Is this what falling felt like? Hannibal didn't know, he'd never been tempted to consider it an option. But the devil fell for less and he desired more of this great and terrible delight

Fate gave him an unlikely gift, a taste of heaven in hell, he would rejoice in it, enraptured.

And what a divine revelation that was

Maybe flying felt like falling.

Maybe falling felt like flying

Only time would tell

End Notes

The title is from a Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds song, You can listen Here

Twitter
Tumblr

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!